

MINUTES  
OF  
MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
November 6, 2021

The Historic Preservation Commission met via Zoom on Saturday, November 6, 2021. Commissioners present on Zoom were Leah Rogers, Suzette Astley, Mary Evans, Ed Sauter, Janet Budack, Susan Hargus, Donnie Moore, and Guy Booth. Also present was Edith Dawson, a Friend of HPC. Guests were Nathan Countryman from the Mount Vernon-Lisbon Sun; Scott Ladwig, construction manager from Cornell College; Amanda Mull, Mount Vernon Pharmacy, and Jacob Gondek, presenting a request for design review.

The Minutes of the meeting of October 13, 2021 were approved.

The first design review request is from G Bank Health, LLC, doing business in Mount Vernon as the Mount Vernon Pharmacy. G Bank Health, LLC has recently purchased the building located at 101 1<sup>st</sup> Street SE in Mount Vernon. This property is located in the downtown historic district. The request is to place awnings on the north and west windows of the property, as well as an awning above the front entrance to the building. Amanda Mull had provided pictures of the proposed new awnings with the printing to identify the business as Mount Vernon Pharmacy. The awnings will be similar to other awnings that are in the downtown district. Upon motion made by Guy Booth, seconded by Leah Rogers, a certificate of no material effect was approved.

Jacob Gondek was also present for design review for new siding at his house located at 606 6<sup>th</sup> Ave. NW, Mount Vernon. His house is located in the Ash Park Historic District. Jacob had an excellent presentation showing the history of the house and changes that had been made to the property. The house needs new siding because of damage done by the derecho. He is proposing vinyl siding that replaces the vinyl siding that is currently on the house. It will appear as four-inch clapboard siding. Jacob is proposing to do several things that will recreate some of the historic architecture of the house. First, he will be having fish scale siding in the gables of the house. Also, he will have the vents in the gable be a hexagonal shape, rather than the horizontal vents that were put in the house in a previous remodel job. He is also going to be placing vertical corner features that are similar to most of the other houses in the historic district. The main portion of the expense for the new siding is coming as a result of an insurance settlement from the derecho. Although there is always a preference for a return to wood clapboard siding, the insurance company would not pay for this added expense. Jacob indicates he will be taking photographs of the original siding once the damaged vinyl siding is removed. He expressed a desire to, at some point, be able to return the house to its original clapboard siding. Upon motion by Leah Rogers, seconded by Susan Hargus, the Commission approves a certificate of appropriateness for the project. Jacob indicates he will take photos of all of the house after the old vinyl is removed and before the new vinyl is applied. Jacob is showing a strong interest in historic preservation of the property.

Scott Ladwig of Cornell has given us an update on the work needed on King Chapel at Cornell. As he has previously reported, there has been devastating damage done to the building by the derecho. There are many cracks that have become apparent, especially in the southwest corner of the building. Major supporting trusses have been broken or cracked. This has resulted

in cracks showing on the plaster walls of the interior of the building. To more thoroughly examine the structural damage, plaster has been removed in a number of places. Scott had pictures showing major cracks in the actual wall structure. The broken trusses have caused a 19” deviation on the roof line from front to back. It appears there will have to be a new support system for the building, and new trusses put in place to support the roof above the building.

Because of the major construction that will have to be completed, the pipe organ will have to be removed from the building. This will be a costly project, and one that will take great care. A firm from Champaign, IL will be in charge of disassembling all of the pipes and storing them until the repairs on the building are completed. Also, all of the pews and a great deal of the woodwork in the building will be removed as substantial scaffolding will be needed to do the truss repair and the ceiling repair. Scott indicates that he is enlisting help and expertise for the project from many sources. Because of the historic significance of the building, he is getting input from experts throughout the country. The effort that is being put forth by Scott and by Cornell is remarkable and is greatly appreciated. Scott indicates that he wants to keep the Commission informed of the progress on this project, and welcomes our input. Scott has asked that we have a liaison from Historic Preservation to the college for the work to be done on King Chapel. Suzette has volunteered to serve in that capacity.

A final design review issue relates to a new antenna to be placed on the water tower which is in the Cornell historic district. It appears the installation of a new antenna will be under the jurisdiction of the state historic society, but it is suggested that we be involved in knowing how the work will be done, and what, if any impact it may have on the landscaping or other features in Memorial Park. It appears there will not be a building permit issued for the work, therefore, we will not need to be granting a certificate of appropriateness before the project can move ahead.

Suzette indicated that she has continued to visit with Jennifer Price regarding the amendment of the Cornell Historic District to include the Visitor’s Center as a significant, contributing structure in the district. Jennifer indicates that this would be a good time to have the Cornell Historic District map revised to make it a more accurate representation of the entire district. This will have an increased cost to the project, but it is needed as the previous map was prepared 50 years ago. All agreed that this would be the appropriate time to have the map redone.

Suzette indicates that the Commission has received a check in the amount of \$1,585.00 from the Maurice Foundation. The check does not have a specific designation for usage. It was suggested that before the check is cashed, that we visit with the City Administrator to determine whether this type of a gift needs to go into the City’s general account, or if it can be earmarked for a specific HPC project. Also, Suzette raised the concern that this gift was coming in at a time when the Commission knows it will need to address a design review request from Steve Maurice for repairs that will need to be completed on his house. Steve resides in the Ash home on the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, which is the original Ash homestead. It may be appropriate to defer acceptance of a gift from the foundation until after we have completed a design review request that is pending. Guy Booth volunteered to address this issue with the City Administrator and to discuss how the Maurice Foundation donation should be handled.

Mary Evans indicated more work has been done on the archive room. Edith Dawson, who is a friend of HPC, indicated that all of the glass negatives have been moved to the new archive room. Edith also indicated that there has been a request from Gary Cowles, whose family resided in Mount Vernon in the late 1800's. Mr. Cowles was looking for information about the location of the residence. Mary indicates that there is a residential map from approximately 1906. Leah indicates that he may want to look at the census information from 1885 and 1895. This should be available online. Also, she indicated that the 1895 plat book of Linn County is available online. This information will be passed along to Mr. Cowles.

Mary also indicates that there is a need for an air purifier for the archive room. Because of the mold and dust that was present in the old location, it would be a good idea to make sure an air purifier removes dust and mold that may have been brought into the new room from the old site. We will look into the cost of purchasing the air purifier.

Finally, Mary indicates there is no change in the balance of our budget account. However, we have determined that Jennifer Price will be able to submit an invoice for the bulk of her work so it can be paid in this fiscal year, even though some of the work can not be completed by the end of the fiscal year. This will help us manage our budget.

There being no further business, Suzette indicates that our next meeting is scheduled for November 17 at 5:30 p.m., unless there is no business to be transacted. The meeting will continue to be via Zoom and Suzette will give notice to all members if a meeting is not going to be held.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Booth, Secretary